
A Treatise on the Faith

OF THE

FREE BAPTISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA.

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A TREATISE ON THE FAITH OF THE FREE BAPTISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA.

ARTICLE I.

Being and Attributes of God.

The Scriptures teach that there is only one true and living God, who is a Spirit, self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, independent, good, wise, holy, just, and merciful; the Creator, Preserver, Governor of the Universe; the Redeemer, Saviour, Sanctifier, and Judge of men; and the only proper object of divine worship. The mode of his existence, however, is a subject far above the understanding of man. Finite beings cannot comprehend him.

ARTICLE II.

Creation, Primitive State of Man, and his Fall.

SECTION I.—CREATION—1. *Of the World.*—God created the world, and all things that it contains, for his own pleasure and glory, and the enjoyment of his creatures.

2. *Of the Angels.*—The angels were created by God to glorify him, and obey his commandments. Those who have kept their first estate, he employs in ministering blessings to the heirs of salvation, and in executing his judgments upon the world.

3. *Of Man.*—God created man, consisting of a corporeal body, and a thinking, rational soul. He was made in the similitude of God to glorify his Maker.

SECTION II.—PRIMITIVE STATE OF MAN AND HIS FALL.—Our first parents, in their original state of probation, were perfectly righteous; but in consequence of the first transgression, the nature of their descendants is so unholy, that none by virtue of any natural goodness can become the holy children of God; but they are all dependent for salvation upon the redemption effected through the blood of Christ; and upon being created anew unto holiness through the operation of the Spirit; both of which are freely provided for every descendant of Adam.

ARTICLE III.

Of Christ.

SECTION 1.—The Son of God possesses all divine perfections. His divine perfections are proved from his titles, his attributes, and his works.

1. *His Titles.*—The Bible ascribes to Christ the title of Saviour, Lord of Hosts, the first and the last, God, true God, great God, God over all, mighty God, and everlasting Father.

2. *His Attributes.*—He is eternal, unchangeable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, holy, and is entitled to divine worship.

3. *His Works.*—By Christ the world was created; he preserves and governs it, he has redeemed man, and he will be his final Judge.

SECTION II.—THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.—The Word which in the beginning was with God, and which was God, by whom all things were made, condescended to a state of humiliation in becoming united with a body like ours, pollution and sin excepted. In this state, as a subject of the law, he took our infirmities, was tempted as we are, but lived our example, and rendered perfect obedience to the divine requirements.

ARTICLE IV.

Holy Spirit.

1.—The Scriptures ascribe to the Holy Ghost the acts and attributes of an intelligent being. He is said to guide, to know, to move, to give information, to command, to forbid, to send forth, to reprove, and to be sinned against.

2.—The attributes of God are applied to the Holy Ghost; such as eternity, omnipresence, omniscience, goodness and truth.

3.—The works of God are ascribed to the Holy Ghost; creation, inspiration, giving of life, and sanctification.

4.—The same acts, which in one part of the Bible are attributed to the Holy Ghost, are in other parts said to be performed by God.

5.—The Apostles assert that the Holy Ghost is Lord and God. From the foregoing, the conclusion is that the Holy Ghost is in reality God, and one with the Father in all divine perfections. It has also been shown that

Jesus Christ is God, one in essence with the Father. Then in essence these three, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one.

ARTICLE V.

Atonement and Mediation of Christ.

1. *Atonement*.—As sin cannot be pardoned without a sacrifice, and the blood of beasts could never actually wash away sin, Christ gave his life a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and thus made salvation possible for all men.

2. *Mediation of Christ*.—Our Lord not only died for our sins, but he arose for our justification, and ascended to heaven, where, as Mediator between God and man, he will make intercession for us till the final judgment.

ARTICLE VI.

The Gospel Call.

By virtue of the Atonement, which is designed to counteract the effects of the fall, man is placed in a salvable state; the grace of God, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the invitations of the Gospel are given to all men, and by these they receive power to repent and obey all the requirements of the Gospel. We mean only to say, that salvation for all men is possible, for though in its provision it is free and absolute, yet in its application it is expressly conditional. Salvation, then, being freely provided, and man being capable, through grace, of obtaining it, if he perish whom can he blame but himself?

ARTICLE VII.

Repentance.

The repentance which the Gospel requires is a deep conviction, a penitential sorrow, an open confession, a decided hatred, and an entire forsaking of all sin. This repentance God has enjoined on all men, and without it in this life, the sinner must perish eternally.

ARTICLE VIII.

Faith.

True faith is an assent of the mind to the great and fundamental truths of revelation; an act of the understanding in giving credit to the Gospel through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a firm confidence and

trust in the living God. The fruit of faith is obedience to the Gospel. The power to believe is the gift of God ; but believing is an act of the creature. Repentance and faith are required as a condition of pardon.

ARTICLE IX.

Regeneration.

As God is a holy Being, and heaven a holy place, man must be regenerated before he can enter a state of happiness. This change is a renovation of the soul by the grace and spirit of God, whereby the penitent sinner receives new life, becomes a child of God, and is enabled to perform spiritual service. It is called being born again, born of the Spirit, &c.

ARTICLE X.

Perseverance.

As the regenerate are placed in a state of trial during this life, their future obedience is not determined. Consequently their eternal salvation is depending on their abiding in Christ ; it is therefore their duty and privilege to be steadfast in the truth, to grow in grace, persevere in holiness, and make their election sure.

ARTICLE XI.

The Church.

A Christian Church is an assembly of persons who believe in Christ and worship the true God, agreeably to his word. In a more general sense it signifies the whole body of real Christians throughout the world. The Church being the body of Christ, none but the regenerate, who obey the Gospel, are its real members. Believers are received into a particular church, on their giving evidence of repentance and faith, and being baptized.

SECTION I.—OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.—The officers in the primitive church were apostles, bishops, and deacons. The apostles were the special *Witnesses* of the works and sayings of Christ ; and of course this office ceased when their work was accomplished. The *Gifts* perpetuated in the Church are evangelists, pastors, teachers, helps and governments. These, however, do not appear to be distinct officers, but they imply different kinds of duties, which are performed by bishops or elders, deacons and others.

1. *Bishops* are overseers, who have the charge of souls—to instruct and to rule them by the word. They are called elders, and they perform the duties of pastors, teachers, and evangelists. The qualifications required in a candidate for the office, are as follows:—"He must be guiltless and be the husband of but one wife. He must be watchful, prudent, and have the regular exercise of cool, dispassionate reason. His conduct and manners must be decent, orderly and grave. He must be a lover of hospitality and good men; ready to communicate and able to teach. He must be temperate; not quarrelsome; nor desirous of base gain. He must govern his family well; he must not be a novice, but experienced in the things of God, and have a character not justly liable to reproach. He must be especially called of God to the work, adhere closely to the doctrine of Christ, and be ordained by the laying on of hands.

The duties of an Elder or Bishop is, 1. To be an example to the flock in all things. To preach the word, baptize and administer the Lord's Supper. He should assist in ordaining elders and deacons, and according to his ability, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of his ministry.

2. *A Deacon* is a regular or stated servant of the church. For the qualifications required in a candidate for this office, see 1 Tim. iii. 8, 12. Acts vi. 1-3.

Duties of a Deacon.—1. He should attend to the temporal wants of the poor members of the church.

2. As the design of his appointment was that the ministry might be freed from temporal care, the inference naturally follows that it is his duty to see that *their* wants also are supplied. 3. There being no other officer in the church to superintend its *temporal affairs*, it is inferred from the nature of his office that the deacon should attend to all the concerns essential to its prosperity, which do not devolve on an Elder. 4. From the important nature of his qualifications, it has been considered his duty to take the lead of religious meetings in the absence of the minister.

SECTION II.—ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.—The following ordinances or institutions of the Church were appointed by Christ, and are obligatory on the Church :—

1. *Christian Baptism.*—This is the immersion of believers in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in which are represented their death to the world, the washing of their souls from the pollutions of sin, their resurrection to newness of life, the burial and resurrection of Christ, their resurrection at the last day, and their engagement to serve God.

2. *The Lord's Supper* is designed to commemorate the sufferings of Christ, and to represent, in the use of bread and wine, the communion which saints have with him, and with each other. Every *true believer* in Christ, being a member of his body, and a part of his visible church, has not only a right to partake of his body and his blood in the communion, but is under obligation thus to commemorate his death.

SECTION III.—DUTIES OF THE CHURCH.—The duty of the Church is that obligation which the revelation of God enjoins upon it collectively, or as individuals, for the manifestation of his manifold wisdom, the perfecting of the saints, and the conversion of the world. In this obligation are included the observance of the ten commandments, entire obedience to the influences of the Spirit, to the institutions of the Gospel, and to all the instructions and precepts of the Scriptures. Among the latter are the following particular requirements: Christian fellowship, secret and family prayer, domestic and social duties, watchfulness, administering to the necessities of the poor and afflicted, the support of those that preach the Gospel, and the exercise of church discipline.

ARTICLE XII.

Death.

The bodies of men, being subject to the calamities of the fall, all have died, or will die, except Enoch, Elijah, and the Saints that will be on the earth at the last day. But the soul, spirit, or the immaterial part, survives the dissolution of the body, and immediately after death enters a state of happiness or misery.

ARTICLE XIII.**The Resurrection.**

As the transgression of Adam secured temporal death to all his posterity, so the obedience and resurrection of Jesus Christ render it certain that the bodies of all men will be raised from the dead. The saints will be raised in the likeness of Christ; but the wicked will awake unto shame and everlasting contempt.

ARTICLE XIV.**The General Judgment.**

As men do not receive the due reward of all their deeds in this life, there will be a general judgment, when time and man's probation will close forever. Then all men will be judged according to their works; the righteous will enter into eternal life, and the wicked will go into a state of endless punishment.

CHURCH COVENANT.

Having been brought, as we humbly trust, by Divine grace, to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and accept him as our Saviour, and believing that the interests of His Kingdom require our united efforts, we do therefore adopt the following as our Church Covenant:—

That we will exercise a mutual care, as members, one of another—striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace—to promote the growth of the whole Body in Christian knowledge, holiness and comfort; and to labor together by prayer, precept and example, for the salvation of sinners.

We agree to exert our influence for the maintenance of the public and social worship of God and the ordinances of His house, holding constant communication with each other therein: and we will also contribute of our substance according to our ability and circumstances, for the support of a faithful Ministry, and all other necessary expenses of the Church.

We who are heads of families will maintain prayer in our households; we will also maintain secret prayer, and to the utmost of our ability we will endeavor to train our children, and those under us, for usefulness in the world, in the service of Christ, and in the enjoyment of Heaven.

We agree to attend, to the utmost of our power, the Sabbath, Conference, Prayer, and other Meetings of the Church. In every Conference Meeting we attend, we will report ourselves to the Church, and in no meeting will we wilfully grieve the Holy Spirit of God; we will labor for the prosperity of the Church and its upbuilding in the most holy faith—not forsaking it in adversity, but bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

We will attend to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as we may have opportunity, or as it may be administered by those over us in the Lord.

We will not use intoxicating drinks ourselves, nor allow them to be used in our families, nor furnish them for persons in our employment, except for medical, chemical or mechanical purposes. We will not buy nor sell

these articles, nor give our influence for the traffic in them, only for the purposes above named,

We covenant and agree that we will love all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ; that we will avoid all vain extravagance and sinful conformity to the world, and will abstain from all sinful amusements, as theatres, dances, gambling, and from all vain festivals; and will refrain from all unchaste and profane conversation, and from the reading of wicked and corrupting publications.

We will walk circumspectly towards those who are without, that the cause of God may not be reproached on our account; and will strive to promote those enterprises which have for their object its advancement—among which are Sabbath Schools, Bible Societies, Missions, and Education.

And may the God of Peace sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; to join the glorified around the throne of God, in ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

We agree to the annexed usages as guiding to our faith in doctrine, and our practice in Church Government.

CHURCH USAGES.

SECTION I.

This Church shall be known as the Free Baptist Church, in connection with the Free Baptist Conference of Nova Scotia.

SECTION II.

The leading doctrines held by this Church are those set forth in the Treatise of Faith, as published in A. D. 1866, by the Free Baptist Conference of Nova Scotia, which we consider in harmony with God's Word.

SECTION III.

All the affairs of this Church shall be under the decision of Church Meetings publicly convened. At all Church Meetings the Pastor shall preside, and in case of not having a Pastor, the Senior Deacon.

SECTION IV.

The officers of this Church shall be:—1. A Pastor, to be chosen by the Church. 2. Deacons, similarly elected. 3. Helps may be chosen annually to assist the Deacons and Pastor in their duties. 4. A Clerk, whose duty it is to keep a good and faithful record of the church.

SECTION V.

The Pastor, Deacons, Helps, and Clerk, may meet quarterly, or oftener, if necessary, to arrange and digest any business to be brought before a Church Meeting, and for other purposes when expedient.

SECTION VI.

All business of this Church shall be done by a majority vote, except the reception of members, which shall be unanimous.

SECTION VII.

Any Church may receive the transient labors of any Minister belonging to the Free Will Baptists of the United States of America, or the Free Christian Baptists of New Brunswick, who is in good standing in his own denomination; and if requested by a legal vote of the

Church, shall have full liberty to administer the ordinances and give the right hand of fellowship therein.

SECTION VIII.

This Church admits to full fellowship only such as give satisfactory evidence of being born of God, and are immersed; but admits to communion and equal privileges in worship all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

SECTION IX.

Cases of discipline, after private admonition and counsel by the Pastor or some other officer of the Church, shall be brought before the Officers' Meeting for consideration; but sentence of suspension from church privileges or excommunication shall be the act of the Church Meeting only.

SECTION X.

This Church shall meet at least once in every month for Christian conference; at which time it shall be the duty of every member to attend and report him or herself therein. Any member neglecting to comply with this usage for the space of three months, shall be considered a subject of labor.

SECTION XI.

Any member in good standing, removing from the limits of the Church to which he belongs, or wishing to unite with any other Church, on application to the Church, may receive a letter of commendation by a majority vote of the Church.

SECTION XII.

Whatever mode for obtaining means to defray the expenditures of the Church shall be deemed prudent by legal vote thereof, the members shall co-operate in—all contributing as God prospers them.

SECTION XIII.

Each Church shall send one Delegate to the Quarterly Meeting to which it belongs; every Church containing fifty members, two Delegates; and one additional Delegate for every additional twenty-five members.

SECTION XIV.

The Covenant and Church Usages shall be read in Church Conference at least once in three months.

SECTION XV.

The Church may adopt any rule not contrary to God's Word, which may be necessary for their interests.

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